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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TEGUCIGALPA 003318

SIPDIS

STATE FOR S/CT, L, IO, EB, AND NP
STATE FOR WHA, WHA/USOAS, AND WHA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/09/2012

TAGS: PTER PREL KTIA AORC PARM FAIR EWWT KCRM HO

SUBJECT: HONDURAN ACTION ON SEVEN COUNTERTERRORISM

CONVENTIONS STALLED PENDING CERTIFIED COPIES IN SPANISH

REF: STATE 242866 (ALL NOTAL)

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Roger Pierce;
Reasons 1.5 (B) and (D).

¶11. (U) This is an action request; please see para. 10.

¶12. (SBU) Summary: PolOff met December 6 with Honduran MFA Director General for Treaties Ivonne Bonilla to demarche Bonilla on the 1988 maritime counterterrorism (CT) convention and protocol and to get a status report on the GOH's slow action on becoming a party to five international and two OAS CT conventions, including the maritime convention and protocol. Bonilla claimed the crux of the problem was that the MFA has not been able to obtain certified Spanish-language copies of the conventions. Post requests immediate assistance from the Department, USUN, and USOAS to obtain the necessary documents. End Summary.

¶13. (U) PolOff met December 6 with Honduran MFA Director General for Treaties Ivonne Bonilla to demarche Bonilla on the maritime counterterrorism (CT) convention and protocol (reftel) and to get a status report on the GOH's slow action on becoming a party to international and regional CT conventions.

Honduras Currently Party to Only Five CT Conventions . . .

¶14. (U) PolOff confirmed with Bonilla that the GOH is currently only a party to the following five international counterterrorism conventions:
-- 1963 Tokyo Convention on Offenses and Certain Other Acts Committed Onboard Aircraft
-- 1970 Hague Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft
-- 1971 Montreal Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Civil Aviation
-- 1973 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Internationally Protected Persons, and
-- 1979 Convention Against the Taking of Hostages.

. . . But About to Become a Party to Two More

¶15. (U) PolOff congratulated Bonilla on the GOH taking action to become a party to the:
-- 1997 Convention for the Suppression on Terrorist Bombings, and
-- 1999 Convention on the Suppression of Financing of Terrorism Crimes (signed by the GOH November 11, 2001). The MFA had forwarded both to Congress in October, Congress approved both in early November, and since then Congress and the Executive Branch have been completing all the required steps. Two decrees are now awaiting publication in the "La Gaceta," the Honduran version of the Federal Register, to become official. Bonilla was not sure if the decrees would be published prior to the end of December.

Two Down, Seven to Go

¶16. (U) PolOff confirmed with Bonilla that the GOH is still not/not a party to the following five international CT conventions, including the two maritime conventions:
-- 1980 Convention on the Physical Protection on Nuclear Materials
-- 1988 Convention for the Suppression on Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (SUA Convention)
-- 1988 Protocol for the Suppression on Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf (SUA Protocol)
-- 1988 Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation
-- 1991 Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection (signed by the GOH March 26, 1991).

The GOH is not a party to the following two Organization of American States (OAS) CT conventions either:

-- 1971 OAS Convention to Prevent and Punish the Acts of Terrorism Taking the Form of Crimes Against Persons and Related Extortion that are of International Significance

(signed by the GOH February 2, 1971)
-- 2002 OAS Convention to Prevent and Punish Acts of
Terrorism (signed by the GOH June 3, 2002).

MFA Claims Lack of Spanish Versions Key to Delay

¶17. (SBU) Bonilla claimed that the GOH did want to be a member to all of these conventions but complained that the MFA first needed certified Spanish-language copies of the conventions that would be suitable for forwarding to Congress for consideration. Bonilla said that she had asked Honduran diplomatic missions to obtain certified Spanish-language copies of the conventions but they had not done so to date. She then showed PolOff drafts of letters from the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Anibal Quinonez to the Honduran Ambassadors/Consul Generals/PermReps in Berlin, London, Montreal, Rome, the UN, and Vienna instructing them to obtain the needed documents. Bonilla said that the letters would be sent shortly.

¶18. (SBU) PolOff offered to assist if possible and Bonilla said that the MFA would greatly appreciate any USG assistance on this issue, as she was not optimistic that her diplomatic colleagues would obtain the necessary Spanish-language versions. Poloff noted that obtaining the necessary OAS documents should not be difficult. Bonilla agreed, but it was clear that she had focused more on the international CT conventions and was not very familiar with either OAS CT convention. Political Section Chief plans to call Honduran OAS PermRep to urge him to take swift action to obtain the documents.

¶19. (U) Following the meeting PolOff sent Bonilla hyperlinks to UN, OAS, IAEA, ICAO, and IMO websites on CT conventions that included the English text and status of the conventions.

¶10. (SBU) Action request for the Department, USUN, and USOAS: Post requests assistance to obtain for the GOH certified Spanish-language copies of the five international and two OAS counterterrorism conventions mentioned previously. Post suggests that the documents be given to one or more of the following: the Honduran Mission to the UN, the Honduran Mission to the OAS, the Honduran Embassy, or pouched to Post for delivery to the MFA.

¶11. (U) Post point of contact is Deputy Political Chief Derrick Olsen, IVG phone: 539-4394, phone: (504) 236-9320 x4394, fax: (504) 238-4446, unclassified and classified e-mail.

Without USG Assistance, Delay Will Likely Continue

¶12. (C) Comment: The GOH has been a good and reliable friend of the U.S. on counterterrorism, both under former President Flores and current President Maduro. Maduro's government hosted a major U.S. military counterterrorism exercise in March and has quickly responded with freeze orders to all U.S. requests regarding suspect terrorist bank accounts. No terrorist assets have been found in Honduran financial institutions, to date. However, the GOH still has not designated a national coordinator for counterterrorism, filed its national report in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373, and most of all, signed and/or ratified the five outstanding international conventions/protocols and two OAS conventions against terrorism. There is no high-level coordinated GOH effort to ensure that the GOH rapidly becomes a party to these conventions, and thus, the process has bogged down in the bureaucracy over the issue of obtaining certified Spanish-language copies of the conventions. Post would greatly appreciate Department, USUN, and USOAS assistance to jump-start this moribund process. End Comment.
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